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IF Directorate engineer sails aboard carrier

by **Fran Crum, Information Directorate**

ROME, N.Y. — An Air Force Research Laboratory engineer recently hit the high seas as part of his research responsibilities.

Marc J. Pitarys, an electronics engineer, in the Embedded Information Systems Engineering Branch of AFRL's Information Directorate, visited the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) as part of his duties as technical director of the X-45 Joint Unmanned Combat Air Systems (J-UCAS) Program.

The J-UCAS program is a joint DARPA/Air Force/Navy effort to demonstrate the technical feasibility, military utility and operational value for a networked system of high performance, weaponized unmanned air vehicles to effectively and affordably prosecute 21st century combat missions. J-UCAS program combines the efforts that were previously known as the DARPA/USAF Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle (UCAV) and the DARPA/USN Naval Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle (UCAV-N) programs.

Pitarys sailed onboard the ship during training exercises in the Pacific to gain familiarity with carrier suitability issues and understand carrier airspace, mission, and flight deck operations.

The J-UCAS program will conduct demonstrations related to operations in carrier controlled airspace, catapult and recovery, and flight deck operations, according to Pitarys.

"Part of our effort is development of naval demonstrators in addition to land-based aircraft," Pitarys said.

Pitarys observed flight operations in the Landing Signal Officer's platform and on the flight deck. He also observed command and control operations in the Stennis' Primary Flight Control, where the air commander controls flight operations within five miles of the carrier. @